

# Charley Crocker As I Knew Him

By WALTER PRINCE

(Charles Crocker of Chestnut St., who retires after 29 years of devoted public service, was born in Bridgewater on March 26, 1878, but he had been coming to Duxbury summers from his earliest years, for his mother, Betsy Bradford Cushing, was born here, as were many preceding ancestors. Charles, one of six children, was 11 when he took the electric train from Brockton, where his parents had lived, to Whitman. He took a train from Whitman to Kingston, where Walter Prince's story begins.—Ed.)

He alighted from the train and trudged along the tracks to Island Creek and thence to a Tinkertown home now owned by Mrs. Katherine Russell. In the carpet-bag he carried were two bantam hens and a rooster (in a grape basket) and he had a hard time keeping the carpet-bag from hitting the railroad sleepers. This was Charles Crocker, who attended Island Creek School and Partridge Academy (he remembers Hannah Sims and Principal Knight, who lived in the present Charles Burnham house on Water St.)

At the age of 14, he worked in the Atlas tack factory in Island Creek (opposite the flume of the mill pond next to Roger Cushing's ice-house.) He was 18 when he went to work for Levi Cushing, whose livery stable was on the present site of the A&P at Hall's Corner. Levi was the grandfather of Paul and Levi, whom we know at their garage.

The stable filled a great need, for there were no cars, and trains ran hourly to and from Boston and Plymouth. Commuters, shoppers, salesmen and others had to be driven around town in barges,

In 1948, with his sons' help, he built his home. Every stick of wood was grown on his own lot on North Hill. He did some horse trading along the way, and it's doubtful if he lost in many deals, even when horses were not involved.

Later he worked for the road surveyors, Eden Soule and Edward O'Neil. His experience with landscape work helped him set grades and supervise the rolling of hot mix roads.

His friends put his name on the ballot and he served two terms on the school committee. Also, later on the boards of Selectmen, Assessors, Welfare and Board of Health. He was chairman of the Welfare Board. He rendered his greatest service to the town as assessor because he knew the town, its people and values so well. When Phil Delano and I were elected we found Charley most cooperative, and made him Chairman of Assessors. In the yearly evaluation of property there may be unintentional omissions. It works both ways. As windmills became less used for water pumping they were not always taken off the list, and sometimes the taxpayer would call Charley and complain.

"Well, I don't know," he would say. "Let's take a ride out there."

Now and then this resulted in the discovery of valuable out-buildings not listed, and the \$100 deduction would bring an \$800 or \$1,000 addition. After all, we are bound to establish the Fair Cash Value.

Charley has been frugal and thrifty, often saying, "I don't want the people to do anything for me. I don't need anything." But too many felt they wanted in some way to express their appreciation for services and kindnesses rendered.

Through the grapevine we learned he might be able to use an im-

Peopb - Crocker

coaches and buggies. There was road work and logging, and many horses were needed. The stable had about 40. Eben Briggs' father had a similar stable at the other end of town.

Charley, an important man there, married the boss' daughter, Nettie Cushing who, like him, is a direct descendant of John Alden and Priscilla. (In the Nov. 28 issue of Life Magazine we read under "Life Visits The Mayflower Descendants": "SELECTMAN AND ASSESSOR of Duxbury Mass., Charley Crocker, 70, has 'never bothered much' about his Alden ancestry. He prefers to work in his turnip patch.") Always a family man with loyal friends, they brought up twins Robert and Richard, who live nearby, and a daughter, Geraldine now in Washington in Government service. He has always had a fine garden and many of us know of his white turnips through his generosity.

set. He will receive the over-subscription with the names of the donors when they are all turned in to me.

So, Charles, we all band together to wish you many more years of happiness with your family, friends and garden.